

Tuesday, January 1, 2013

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico's Third District voted tonight in support of a compromise plan to resolve the fiscal cliff by avoiding an income tax hike on middle-class families, extending unemployment benefits, and preventing arbitrary spending cuts that could harm the national laboratories.

"Like many New Mexicans, I am disappointed with how this process played out during a Congress that has created one manufactured crisis after another. This plan is far from perfect and I do not support all of its elements, however, it represents a compromise that protects middle-class families in New Mexico from seeing their income taxes increase and it ensures that those struggling to find work during this difficult time will continue to have support," Congressman Luján said. "In addition, the extension of important tax credits will support hard-working families, help young adults afford college, and support a growing renewable energy industry. Finally, while I would have preferred a long-term solution to the sequester's arbitrary budget cuts that I have opposed from the beginning, this plan will prevent these cuts from taking place immediately – threatening the vitality of our national labs and our nation's competitiveness."

Under the plan, the Bush tax cuts will expire on individuals making more than \$400,000 and couples making more than \$450,000; unemployment benefits will be extended for a year; and arbitrary spending cuts through the sequester will be delayed for two months.

Other key provisions of the plan include:

- A permanent fix to the Alternative Minimum Tax to prevent tax increases on middle-class families;
- An extension of the wind production tax credit, child tax credit, and American Opportunity Tax Credit that helps families pay for college;
- Preventing a 27 percent cut for doctors who treat Medicare patients;
- Preventing milk prices from rising sharply; and
- Blocking a pay raise for members of Congress.

"I am also disappointed that the House has still failed to take action on other important measures such as a new farm bill, reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, and legislation that enables New Mexico to use existing funds to clean up abandoned uranium mines," Luján concluded. "This bill, introduced by Senator Bingaman, has passed the full Senate and House Natural Resources Committee with unanimous support and deserves a vote on the House floor."

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